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ABSTRACT

This workbook is designed to help participants of the Independence Training Program (ITP) to achieve a definition of "independence." The program was developed for teenage girls. The process for developing the concept of independence consists of four steps. Step one instructs the participant to create an imaginary situation where she is completely independent. After observing the situation carefully, the participant develops her own list of characteristics of independence. The second step involves the participant's imagining another situation where independence is totally lacking. A list of these situational characteristics is then composed. Step three instructs the participant to read lists included in the workbook and written by other women who were describing what independence meant to them. The lists are then compared and if there are points not on the participant's list, she adds them. Step four involves reviewing the three previous lists, and writing down any new ideas. The participants then proceed to discuss the concept they have developed. (JS)

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by

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(Self-Contained Workbook)
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The purpose of this workbook is to serve as a help to possible participants of the Independence Training Program (ITP). When we first came up with the idea of helping teenage girls become independent, it sounded great. We all felt that most of the programs and services we knew of for girls paid too much attention to making "little ladies" of girls and protecting them from that "cold, cruel world" that men talk about. We felt that most girls, who have come into contact with DYS, the courts and/or police, already know a lot about taking care of themselves, and that with a little help from us they could probably make it very nicely without a foster parent or live-in advocate of any kind.

Well, we thought and we planned and we wrote about the kind of program that we thought would best meet the needs of girls who wanted to become independent. When we got together to compare our plans, it was obvious that each one of us had a different idea about what it means to be independent. Some of us thought it was having a good job, others that it was having your head together about what you want out of life, still others felt it was living on your own and supporting yourself.

At that point we stopped and used a workbook very much like this one to get ourselves straight about exactly what we meant by independence and to help us come to some agreement about what our program should emphasize. Now we feel pretty sure of what we think independence is, but that still doesn't mean that you will agree with us, nor that you should.

We want to help each girl arrange a program through which she can achieve independence--whatever she thinks that is. But we can't do this unless you know and we know exactly what independence means for you.

Turn the page now and follow the directions you find there. Don't look ahead to see what's coming (it won't work as well if you do), just go through each page as it comes taking all the time you need to do each step completely. The whole process will take about an hour. Once you finish, then we'll use your answers as a starting point in discussing with you how we can set up a program that will help you achieve your definition of independence.

STEP ONE:

The first step is to imagine that you are in a situation where you are completely, truly independent. This imaginary situation should be as real as you can make it--with people in it, and things like rooms, and furniture (if it's inside) or buildings and trees (if it's outside)--whatever it takes to make the picture complete. Give this a lot of thought. Be sure you can see the picture clearly in your mind before you go on.

Now look at yourself in this scene. You are independent. Everything you do and say and think convinces you that you are as independent as you ever want to be. In fact, your situation is ideal.

What I want you to do is to look at this situation--observe it very carefully and write down all the things you see in this situation that would show you that you are truly independent. Write them down on a list. Do this now on the next page.

LIST

ALL THE THINGS IN THE SITUATION WHICH WOULD SHOW ME THAT I AM TRULY INDEPENDENT

(Don't just put down the first two or three things that come to mind. Keep writing until you've listed everything you see.)

When you have finished your list, go on to the next page.

STEP TWO:

The second step is to imagine another situation--it can be the same setting as the first situation or a different one. The important thing is that once again you make the scene as complete as possible in your mind--with people and things, etc. You are in this situation, but this time you lack all independence. Everything you do and say and think and feel convinces you that your independence is completely absent.

Look at this situation carefully. Now write down in a list all the things you see which show you that you lack independence. Do this now on the next page.

LIST:

ALL THE THINGS WHICH INDICATE TO ME THAT I LACK INDEPENDENCE
(Don't just write down the opposites of things on your first list. Try to move beyond that to new things you hadn't seen or mentioned before.)

When you have finished your list, go on to the next page.

STEP THREE:

Now remove the staples at the top and bottom of this page and read the lists on the following pages. These lists were written by other women who were describing what independence meant to them. Read each item carefully and decide whether it belongs on your list. Remember that this workbook is supposed to help you tell what independence means to you so don't put any item on your list that isn't "you." You may already have some of the items listed on the following pages--or you may find one that is ridiculous; makes you mad and causes you to think of several more things that should be on your list. The point is to make your list as complete as possible, so don't hesitate to use or ignore any of the items you read on the next pages.

INDEPENDENCE IS

1. dressing to suit yourself, not the occasion or other people
2. having a strong, clear, calm voice
3. being able to say what you want in a way that others understand.
4. being capable of organizing people around common areas of interest.
5. being self-confident.
6. not hesitating to talk about oneself--accomplishments, aspirations, etc.
7. not being dependent upon external things for support--doesn't need a drink in hand or to fuss with serving others in order to be comfortable.
8. deciding what you want to eat and when you want to eat it.
9. being responsible for your own health and the physical fitness of your body.
10. shopping for your own food, your own clothes and other necessities.
11. managing your own money and managing a checking account--paying bills!
12. earning your own money and maintaining an income.
13. finding a job and keeping it.
14. arranging and caring for your own home and caring for and controling your own environment.
15. listening to music you like.
16. doing things alone and enjoying yourself while alone.
17. traveling.
18. organizing your own day - your own life - becoming

responsible to yourself - making your own decisions

19. choosing your own "way of life".

20. feeling free and yet feeling that you can control your own actions.

STEP FOUR:

By now you probably have a pretty complete list of items. As one last step, go back and slowly read over all the things you put down in Steps One, Two and Three. Have you said everything you can about what independence means to you? After you read through your list, if there are still some things that didn't come out in the imaginary situations or in other people's lists, write them down here.

That's it! Thanks for completing the workbook. Now let's talk.